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## Illinois Coastal Grants Program 2015 Grant Guidelines

<b>Funding Opportunity:</b> Illinois Coastal Grants Program
<b>Announcement Type:</b> Initial Announcement
<b>Federal Agency Name:</b> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Dept. of Commerce
<b>CFDA Number:</b> 11.419
<b>Application Deadline:</b> December 15, 2014
<b>Grant Start Date:</b> Approximately September 2015 <b>Grant End Date:</b> Approximately Feb. 2017
<b>Minimum Grant:</b> \$20,000* <b>Maximum Grant:</b> \$100,000
<b>Application Materials:</b> <a href="http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/2015-RFP.aspx">http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/2015-RFP.aspx</a>

\* Applications for less than \$5,000 should use the small grant application packet, available here: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/smallgrants.aspx>. Contact us before applying for grants between \$5,000 and \$20,000.

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# Introduction

Applications are now being accepted for the Illinois Coastal Grants Program. This grant cycle focuses on the following project categories:

- A) Coastal Environmental Education and Outreach
- B) Sustainable Coastal Planning
- C) Habitat Restoration
- D) Small Grants (<\$5000): The document that you are currently reading **ONLY** applies to grants above \$5000. For small grants, please download an application from:  
<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/smallgrants.aspx>

## I. About our program

- Illinois Coastal Grants are administered by the Illinois Coastal Management Program (ICMP), part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). This program is funded through a federal grant from the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) through NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.
- ICMP was approved in January 2012 with the goal of protecting, preserving, and restoring the natural and cultural resources along the Illinois Lake Michigan shoreline for this and future generations.
- The information contained within this document applies to **Illinois Coastal Grants Request for Proposals with an application deadline of December 15, 2014**. Future grant cycles may have different award criteria.

## II. Eligible Project Locations

This grant program is only open to projects in Lake and Cook Counties in Illinois.

Sustainable Coastal Planning projects, permanent educational displays/signs, on-the-ground work conducted as part of an education project, and habitat restoration work must be entirely within the Illinois Coastal Zone boundary (shown in blue in **Figure 1**).

All other Education and Outreach projects must be entirely within Lake and Cook Counties in Illinois. All projects, but particularly Education and Outreach projects outside of the Illinois Coastal Zone, must demonstrate a clear connection to the Lake Michigan shoreline, coastal environments and/or coastal environmental priorities.

We have provided several resources to determine whether your project is within the Illinois Coastal Zone.

### Resources:

- Zoomable Google Map: <https://sites.google.com/site/icmpmaps/coastal-zone-map>
- PDF Maps: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/boundaries.aspx> (scroll to bottom of page for links)
- Google Earth layer: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Documents/GoogleEarthLayerCoastalZone.kmz>
- ArcGIS layer: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Documents/CoastalZoneBoundary.zip>

**Figure 1:** Illinois Coastal Zone Map



### III. Environmental Priorities

This grant program funds projects which address environmental priorities within the Illinois Coastal Zone. Please identify which of the following Coastal Priorities your project addresses in your project application form. These are listed in no particular order.

- **Restoring Habitat, Ecosystems, and Natural Areas:** Improving coastal habitats, ecosystems, and natural areas. The habitats in the Illinois Lake Michigan Coastal Zone support a wide range of native natural communities and contain important resident and migratory native species.
- **Preventing and Mitigating Nonpoint Source Pollution:** Protecting our water bodies from nonpoint source pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, and road salt that threaten water quality.
- **Developing our Coast Sustainably:** Ensuring that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Reducing Risks from Persistent Bio-Accumulative Toxins:** Protecting the health of humans and ecosystems by reducing risks caused by persistent bio-accumulative toxins (PBTs). PBTs are toxic chemicals which persist in the environment and bioaccumulate in food chains. This topic includes fish consumption advisories and some of the beneficial use impairments in effect at Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern.
- **Encouraging Public Access and Nature-Based Recreation:** Increasing the connection of people to the environment through opportunities to experience nature and the outdoors. Public access and outdoor recreation in the Lake Michigan basin are important components of the region's economy and quality of life.
- **Preventing and Managing Invasive Species:** Preventing the introduction of, and mitigate the impacts of plants and animals that have not co-evolved with existent species.
- **Addressing Climate Change:** Ensuring that citizens and ecosystems are prepared for, to the extent possible, the risks to coastal areas from climate change, such as changes in storms, flooding and runoff from changing weather patterns related to warming global temperatures, and impacts on Midwest water resources.
- **Coastal Economic Development:** Promoting and enhancing the role of the Lake Michigan Coast on the Illinois economy, with a focus on transportation, recreation, tourism, and energy.
- **Valuing our Priority Waterways:** Protecting and restoring the following waterways in the Illinois Coastal Zone: Wilmette Harbor; the North Shore Channel; the North Branch of the Chicago River downstream of the North Branch Dam; the South Branch to its confluence with the Illinois Sanitary Ship Canal; Lake Calumet; the Calumet River; the Little Calumet River to its junction with the Cal-Sag Channel; Grand Calumet River to its junction with the Cal-Sag Channel. These waterways provide valuable habitat, recreational opportunities, and play a major role in the regional economy.



## Regional Stakeholder Priorities

The Illinois Coastal Management Program recently completed an implementation plan which identifies stakeholder priorities for the next three to five years. Addressing these priorities will be one consideration in the ranking of proposals. The Illinois Coastal Zone Map (**Figure 1**; see page 2) shows the approximate division of the coast into three sections with dividing lines at Wilmette Harbor and the Calumet River. Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern, in Waukegan, IL has additional stakeholder-identified priorities. Priorities for each region of the Illinois Coast and the entire Coastal Zone are presented below (**Table 1**). Applicants should make it clear in the project narrative whether the project addresses a stakeholder priority for its region and which priority is addressed.

**Table 1.** Stakeholder-Identified Priorities for each section of the Illinois Coastal Zone. See: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/ILMIP.aspx> for more details.

<b>Lake County and North Shore</b>
<b>Top Priorities</b>
Improve the connectivity among core areas of natural lands
Increase recreational access to waterways and beaches
Link water and land-based trails and facilities
<b>Secondary Priorities</b>
Coordinate management of natural lands, using targeted restoration to improve ecological conditions
Restore and improve riparian areas, lakes and streams as habitat for birds and wildlife, including expanding protection and restoration of near shore aquatic habitat
Ensure habitat needs for safe passage of aerial migrants
Promote and improve diverse recreational opportunities
<b>Chicago and Evanston's Lakefront and Waterways</b>
<b>Top Priorities</b>
Improve habitat value of urbanized areas including neighborhoods
Restore and improve riparian areas, lakes and streams as habitat for birds and wildlife, including expanding protection and restoration of near shore aquatic habitat
Use green infrastructure and other strategies to manage storm water, reduce runoff volumes and reduce frequency of untreated sewage release
<b>Secondary Priorities</b>
Improve and coordinate regional collaboration on invasive species management to control terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and improve ecological conditions
Help make beach and water conditions safe for recreational use
Ensure that waterways are not dispersal vectors for aquatic invasive species – including supporting development of environmentally responsible shipping

**Table 1 (continued).** Stakeholder-Identified Priorities for each section of the Illinois Coastal Zone.

<b>South Chicago and the Calumet</b>
<b>Top Priorities</b>
Improve hydrologic regimes to more natural conditions
Protect and increase interconnected open space, especially along priority waterways
Support rehabilitation and redevelopment of brownfield and old industrial sites
<b>Secondary Priorities</b>
Improve and coordinate regional collaboration on invasive species management to control terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and improve ecological conditions
Ensure habitat needs for safe passage of aerial migrants
Support recreational use of waterways and increase number of public access points
Make water conditions safe for recreational use
<b>Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern (AOC)</b>
<b>Top Priorities</b>
Maintain and improve terrestrial habitat for native plants and animals.
Improve beach health and reduce beach closures.
Reduce impacts of contaminants to humans and wildlife.
<b>Throughout the Illinois Coastal Zone</b>
<b>Top Priorities</b>
Restore and improve riparian areas, lakes and streams as habitat for birds and wildlife, including expanding protection and restoration of near shore aquatic habitat.
Use green infrastructure and other strategies to manage storm water and reduce runoff.
Improve and coordinate regional collaboration on invasive species management to control terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and improve ecological conditions.
<b>Secondary Priorities</b>
Ensure habitat needs for safe passage of aerial migrants.
Prevent bio-accumulative toxins from entering waterways, especially recreational areas.

#### IV. Grant Categories

Projects must fit within the following grant categories. Select the category your project best fits. If you have questions, please contact us. Use the application materials specific to the grant category.

(A) Environmental Education and Outreach (page 6)

(B) Sustainable Coastal Planning (page 8)

(C) Habitat Restoration (page 10)

## A) Environmental Education and Outreach

### Definition

Environmental Education and Outreach are defined under this grant as educational and training activities, outreach, and information dissemination aimed at developing an environmentally literate citizenry with the 1) skills, 2) knowledge, and 3) inclination to make well-informed choices concerning the environment, and that 4) exercises these rights and responsibilities as members of the community. Scientifically-sound information about environmental processes and systems, critical thinking skills, decision-making skills, and personal and civic responsibility are underpinnings of effective environmental education.

Nearly all **Sustainable Coastal Planning** projects will include an outreach component to get stakeholders involved, so if you are thinking, “My project is both an Education and a Planning Project,” it probably falls under the Sustainable Coastal Planning category.

### Project Eligibility

In order to be eligible, all education and outreach projects must satisfy the definition of environmental education and outreach above and address at least one of the coastal environmental priorities listed in Section III. They must also be located in Cook County or Lake County in Illinois. Permanent educational displays must be entirely within the Illinois Coastal Zone. Please contact ICMP staff with questions on project eligibility.

Examples of **eligible** environmental education and outreach projects include:

- Teacher/ educator training
- Formal or informal environmental education programs
- Outreach and awareness programs
- Permanent Educational Displays (please see below for more details)
- Creation and distribution of educational or outreach materials, etc.

Examples of **ineligible** environmental education and outreach projects include:

- Basic or applied research, etc.

### Field Trips

Because this is a *coastal* grant program, we strongly encourage applicants whose proposals include field trips to select sites to visit which are within the Illinois Coastal Zone. Field trips to sites outside of the Illinois Coastal Zone are allowable, but cannot include on-the-ground work. See the section on page 13 about On-the-Ground Work for more information.

### Permanent Educational Displays

Grants are available to fund the design, fabrication and installation of permanent exhibits, signs or displays within existing facilities that are open to the public with no fee for access and are within the IL Coastal Zone. These displays must be designed to educate the public on Lake Michigan Coastal issues,



stewardship, and related environmental issues and solutions. Outdoor signs or displays cannot involve more than minimal ground disturbance.

### Project Evaluation Criteria for Education Projects

- **Quality of proposal:** Projects will be evaluated whether the project goals and objectives are clear, the project approach is understandable and appropriate, and the extent to which the project leverages resources.
- **Creativity, Innovation, and Uniqueness:** Projects will be evaluated on whether they use creative or innovative techniques or media.
- **Need:** The following criteria will be evaluated: Does the project fill an identified un-filled niche? Is the project clear? How well does the project address one or more of the educational priorities, or, for classroom projects, Illinois Learning Standard(s) or STEM? Projects will also be evaluated on how well they fit into stakeholder-identified Illinois Coastal priorities (See **Table 1**)
- **Sound Methods and Science:** Projects will be evaluated based upon whether the approach is technically/scientifically sound.
- **Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes:** Projects will be evaluated based upon the anticipated positive impact on coastal resources, the number of people served, and the quality of the plan to achieve this goal.
- **Feasibility and Timeline:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the proposal clearly articulates through its budget, timeline, and narrative the feasibility of achieving objectives and completing the project on time and on budget.
- **Cost Effectiveness and Degree of Impact:** The reasonableness of the project cost in context of anticipated outcomes will be evaluated.
- **Financial Integrity:** This is a reimbursement grant. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a reimbursement-grant funded project and provide required match.
- **Organizational Capacity and Qualifications of Applicant:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon and the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a project on this scale, successfully meet grant requirements, and on whether the personnel are qualified.
- **Partnerships and Local Support:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the demonstrated level of local support for the project and demonstrated through partnerships and letters of support. Partnerships will receive more weight than letters of support.
- **Environmental Justice:** Projects which address the concerns and needs of segments of the population which have been disproportionately affected by adverse environmental impacts will receive extra consideration. This includes projects that address geographic areas with highly concentrated environment hazards and projects which extend work into communities historically neglected due to race and class.

## B) Sustainable Coastal Planning

### Definition

Sustainable Coastal Planning should result in implementable projects that protect and enhance the ecological, social, and economic health of the Illinois Coastal Zone in order to preserve coastal resources for current and future uses. Typically, the planning process identifies community goals, evaluates specific concerns, develops actions and site designs to address goals and concerns, and determines the resources needed to implement the plan.

Sustainable Coastal Planning projects often contain education and outreach components. Applicants who are having difficulty determining which category their project falls under are encouraged to contact ICMP for advice.

### Project Eligibility

In order to be eligible, all sustainable coastal planning projects must:

- Satisfy the definition of sustainable coastal planning above;
- Address at least one of the environmental priorities listed above in Section III;
- Be located completely within the Illinois Coastal Zone (*Please use the mapping resources we provide or contact ICMP staff with questions on project eligibility*). For regional projects with some overlap of the Coastal Zone, 1) only the portion within the Coastal Zone is eligible for grant funding, and 2) match must be directly related to the work within the Coastal Zone.
- Comply with relevant state and federal environmental and historic preservation statutes. Projects proposed for funding will be evaluated for environmental, historical, and cultural impacts. Please be aware that this review may impact final funding decisions.

Examples of **eligible** coastal planning projects include:

- Watershed plans
- Trail or recreation site access plans and/or engineering designs
- Green infrastructure plans and specifications
- Natural resource conservation plans, including restoration and/or management of natural areas and/or fish and wildlife populations
- Sustainable development plans for communities or areas
- Pollution prevention and control plans, etc.

Examples of **ineligible** coastal planning projects include:

- Any work which includes ground disturbance. Grants in this category CANNOT fund and CANNOT use as match any on-the-ground implementation or ground disturbance.
- Basic or applied research
- Planning for for-profit enterprises
- Engineering designs or detailed plans for buildings, restrooms, play areas, large scale structural erosion control projects, etc.

## Project Evaluation Criteria for Sustainable Coastal Planning Projects

- **Quality of proposal:** Projects will be evaluated whether the project goals and objectives are clear, the project approach is understandable and appropriate, and the extent to which the project leverages resources, and whether the project approaches the issue in a creative or innovative way.
- **Need:** Projects will be evaluated on whether the need for the plan is clear. How well does the project address the identified need? Applicant demonstrates sufficient knowledge of existing plans to make the case that this work isn't duplicative. For plan updates, the case is made that the plan needs to be updated. Projects will also be evaluated on how well they fit into the stakeholder-identified Illinois Coastal priorities (See **Table 1**)
- **Sound Methods and Science:** Projects will be evaluated based upon whether the approach is technically/scientifically sound. Project complements and builds upon existing work in a clear and logical way.
- **Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes:** Projects will be evaluated based upon the anticipated positive impact on coastal resources, the likelihood of implementation including demonstrated buy-in from the entity which will implement the plan, and for plan updates, the degree of added benefit from updating the plan.
- **Feasibility and Timeline:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the proposal clearly articulates through its budget, timeline, stakeholder buy-in, and narrative the feasibility of completing the project on time and on budget.
- **Cost Effectiveness and Degree of Impact:** The reasonableness of the project cost in context of anticipated outcomes will be evaluated.
- **Financial Integrity:** This is a reimbursement grant. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a reimbursement-grant funded project and provide required match.
- **Organizational Capacity and Qualifications of Applicant:** Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based upon and the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a project on this scale, successfully meet grant requirements, and on whether the personnel are qualified.
- **Partnerships and Local Support:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the demonstrated level of local support and stakeholder buy-in for the project and demonstrated through partnerships and letters of support.
- **Environmental Justice:** Projects which address the concerns and needs of segments of the population which have been disproportionately affected by adverse environmental impacts will receive extra consideration. This includes projects that address geographic areas with highly concentrated environment hazards and projects which extend work into communities historically neglected due to race and class.

## C) Habitat Restoration

### Definition

Habitat Restoration projects restore and enhance existing habitats within the Illinois Coastal Zone. Projects in this category use scientifically-sound techniques to remove invasive vegetation, plant native species, improve hydrological conditions, or otherwise increase the health of a native ecosystem within the Illinois Coastal Zone. The goals of these projects include improving habitat quality for native plant and animal species, increasing biodiversity, and improving habitat resilience in a changing climate.

### Project Eligibility

In order to be eligible, all sustainable coastal planning projects must:

- Satisfy the definition of habitat restoration above;
- Be located completely within the Illinois Coastal Zone (*Please use the mapping resources we provide or contact ICMP staff with questions on project eligibility*). For regional projects with some overlap of the Coastal Zone, 1) only the portion within the Coastal Zone is eligible for grant funding, and 2) match must be directly related to the work within the Coastal Zone.
- Comply with relevant state and federal environmental and historic preservation statutes. Projects proposed for funding will be evaluated for environmental, historical, and cultural impacts. This review may impact final funding decisions.
- Meet *all* of the following criteria if ground disturbance is included in the project scope:
  - Applicant must be a governmental entity,
  - Project must be on public land or land held in a permanent conservation easement or long-term lease,
  - Project site must be open to the general public without a user fee.

Examples of **eligible** habitat restoration projects include:

- Invasive species removal and broadcast seeding or planting of native species
- Dune plantings
- Nearshore habitat restoration
- Enhancement of habitat corridors
- Ravine restoration
- Wetland restoration, etc.

Examples of **ineligible** habitat restoration projects include:

- Projects with the primary goal of stormwater management such as rain gardens or bioswales. We encourage applicants with this type of project to seek funding through other programs such as the Section 319 grant program, the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, or (if available) the Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant program.
- Projects which construct new habitat such as green roofs
- Basic or applied research, etc.

## Project Evaluation Criteria for Habitat Restoration Projects

- **Quality of proposal:** Projects will be evaluated whether the project goals and objectives are clear, the project approach is understandable and appropriate, and the extent to which the project leverages resources, and whether the project approaches the issue creatively.
- **Need:** Projects will be evaluated on whether the need for the project is clear. How well does the project address the identified need? If this is follow-up work, applicant demonstrates why it is necessary. Projects will also be evaluated on how well they fit into the stakeholder-identified Illinois Coastal priorities (See **Table 1**).
- **Sound Methods and Science:** Projects will be evaluated based upon whether the approach is technically/scientifically sound.
- **Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes:** Projects will be evaluated based upon the anticipated positive impact on coastal resources and the quality of the plan to ensure that the project site(s) will be maintained over the next 5 years.
- **Feasibility and Timeline:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the proposal clearly articulates through its budget, timeline, permits and licenses, stakeholder buy-in, and narrative the feasibility of completing the project on time and on budget.
- **Cost Effectiveness and Degree of Impact:** The reasonableness of the project cost in context of anticipated outcomes will be evaluated.
- **Financial Integrity:** This is a reimbursement grant. Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based upon the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a reimbursement-grant funded project and provide required match.
- **Organizational Capacity and Qualifications of Applicant:** Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based upon and the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate ability to complete a project on this scale, successfully meet grant requirements, and on whether the personnel are qualified.
- **Stakeholders:** Proposals will be evaluated based upon the applicant's understanding of which stakeholders will be impacted by the restoration work and the applicant's plan to get them involved and build local support. Partnerships and letters of support will be taken into consideration.
- **Environmental Justice:** Projects which address the concerns and needs of segments of the population which have been disproportionately affected by adverse environmental impacts will receive extra consideration. This includes projects that address geographic areas with highly concentrated environment hazards and projects which extend work into communities historically neglected due to race and class.

Successful applicants may be required to provide additional documentation including proof of ownership, long-term lease or conservation easement and a list of local, state, and federal permits required for the project.

# Information for All Applicants

## V. Basic Information

- Submit an electronic copy and a paper copy of your application materials. Please follow the application instructions closely and include all required materials.
- Resubmission of unfunded proposals from previous rounds is allowed, but applicants are required to use updated forms and follow current application instructions.
- **Application due date:** Monday, December 15, 2014. Please submit electronic application before 5pm on this date. Paper application must be post marked by December 15, 2014.
- **Grant Period:** 18 months, Approximately September 2015 through February 2017. Dates depend upon approval by NOAA.
- This is a reimbursement grant program. **The grantee must spend its money first and then ICMP will reimburse the grantee for eligible costs. Reimbursements will be made quarterly.**
- Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis.
- Total funding available is dependent upon federal funding. Past rounds have awarded between \$550,000 and \$975,000 per funding year.
- Grants for this cycle typically range from \$20,000 to \$100,000. Applicants must contact us before applying for grants between \$5,000 and \$20,000.
- This Grant Guidelines booklet does not apply to small grants under \$5000. Please refer to our small grant application packet: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/smallgrants.aspx>
- Project must have clear objectives which will be achieved on time and on budget. Projects cannot be dependent upon potential future funding from ICMP to meet objectives.
- Projects must be for public benefit.

## VI. Grant Consultations

We are available in advance of the application deadline to discuss your project idea and application. In a previous grant round, funded proposals were twice as likely to come from applicants who took advantage of this opportunity. We can help you determine whether your project is eligible and a good fit for this grant program. We can also point you in the direction of partners and resources that may strengthen your application. Contact Lisa Cotner ([lisa.cotner@illinois.gov](mailto:lisa.cotner@illinois.gov) or (312)-814-6414) no later than **December 1, 2014** if you'd like to schedule a 45 minute phone call or meeting. An online sign-up calendar is available at: <http://bit.ly/1oclCrm>

## VII. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

### Eligible Applicants

- Units of local government
- State agencies
- Colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning
- Park districts
- Forest preserve districts
- School districts
- Port authorities
- Basin commissions



- Non-profit organizations
- **Restrictions to eligibility:** Non-profits are not eligible to receive funds to complete habitat restoration projects which involve ground disturbance.
- **Prior Applicants:** Prior applications, whether funded or not, have no bearing on eligibility

Submissions by ineligible organizations will not be considered. These include:

Private individuals, for-profit organizations, or organizations on the Departmental/ Federal/ or State Debarment list.

## VIII. Funding and Match Guidance

### General Information

- As stated above, this is a reimbursement grant program. **The grantee must spend its money first and then ICMP will reimburse the grantee for eligible costs. Reimbursements will be made quarterly.** These grants are designed as project-support grants, not operating-support grants; therefore it is strongly recommended that total project cost NOT exceed 20% of an organization's operating budget.
- To be eligible for reimbursement, costs must be identified and approved through the application process and incurred after grant approval.
- This project may be part of a larger project whose other elements are beyond the scope of this grant program. If that is the case, the other elements of the project should **not** be included on the Detailed Proposed Budget Form. Those costs may be identified as additional leveraged funds, but not as required match.

### Food and Beverages

- Food and beverages are not allowable grant expenses due to federal funding rules.

### On-the-ground work

- Planning grants are for planning purposes only, not for implementation. Planning grants cannot directly fund any ground disturbance. Match funding cannot be used to fund ground disturbance.
- Permanent Educational Display projects must be within existing facilities that are open to the public with no fee for access. Outdoor signs or displays cannot involve more than minimal ground disturbance.
- Education and Outreach grants may train students to perform habitat restoration and do other on-the-ground work. Work sites must be within the Illinois Coastal Zone. The goal of the project must be environmental education and training. It is not sufficient for the applicant to state that the goal of the project is education or training; it should be apparent from the complexity of the skill(s) and the relative proportion of time that participants spend getting trained in new skills versus applying their new skills.
- Habitat Restoration grants can fund on-the-ground work.

### CPA Review of Reimbursement Submissions

- We require substantial documentation for reimbursement requests. Therefore we strongly encourage applicants to add a line item to your budget to pay your Certified Public Accountant

to create and/or review your quarterly reimbursement submissions and provide a signed letter attesting to their accuracy. Although we are not requiring such a review of reimbursement documents by a CPA for this round of grants, requests for reimbursement which are accompanied by a signed letter from a Certified Public Accountant will be processed first before other submissions. We will allow this review to be used as match or included as a reimbursable expense.

## Match Criteria

- Federal funds cannot be used as match.
- Most applicants are required to provide a 1:1 match, meaning the grant funds 50% of the total project cost. The only exception is local governmental applicants from Economically Challenged Communities, which qualify for a 1:3 match requirement (which means the grant funds 75% of the total project cost). Economically Challenged Communities are described in more detail below.
- Match may be cash or in-kind.
- The source of match must be identified and approved through the application process. **If the match is coming from a partner, include a letter of commitment in your application packet.**
- Secured match is strongly preferred over match which has been applied for but not secured.
- Match expenditure cannot pre-date grant start date and must be spent during the duration of the grant.
- Match must be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives. For example, in order to use volunteer stewardship hours as match, it must be clear in the application how this work is necessary to meet the project objectives.
- Match cannot be included as contributions for any other federally-assisted project or program. That is double counting.
- All expenditures, including match, must be verifiable through the applicant's records. Grantees will be required to track match and provide documentation. Depending upon the source of match, this may include signed and dated volunteer timesheets, donation forms, receipts, and other tracking consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). We require grantees to submit extensive documentation along with quarterly reimbursement requests. Further information will be available to successful applicants
- Match must conform to all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. For further details on federal grant requirements for match, please consult the OMB Circulars which relate to your organization. Links can be found at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_attach#which/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_attach#which/)
- Match expenditures must be integral to the accomplishment of project or program objectives. For example, a grantee could use as match the salary and fringe expenses of an administrator who is being paid by a non-federal source. However, they can only count as match the hours that administrator spends on activities related to the project. Counting time spent on other activities is not allowed, either as match or as a grant-funded expense.

## Economically Challenged Communities

- Economically Challenged Communities for this round of grants are defined as communities partially or completely within the Illinois Coastal Zone having a 2012 per capita equalized assessed valuation (EAV) below \$15,000 and more than 15% of the population below the national poverty level according to the US. Census Bureau. **For this round of grants, local**

**governmental entities in the following municipalities qualify:** North Chicago, Riverdale, Calumet Park, Calumet City, Waukegan, Zion, Blue Island, Dolton, and Burnham.

- The criteria for Economically Challenged Communities are specific to this round of Illinois Coastal Grants. It may be modified in subsequent grant rounds for this program to better assist such communities within the Coastal Zone in accessing this funding program.

## Match Valuation

- **Volunteer Labor:** Rates for volunteer services shall be consistent with those paid for similar work in the applicant's organization. Estimate the number of volunteer hours required for each task and multiply by this rate per hour. Grantees must submit and retain individual time records signed by all volunteers.
- **Volunteer Labor 16 and Under:** Current Minimum Wage
- **Skilled Labor:** Fair Market value of labor per hour with proper documentation
- **Donated Equipment:** FEMA Equipment rates- see website <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pa/eqrates.shtm>
- **Donated Materials:** Fair market value of materials with proper documentation from provider
- **Indirect:** General organizational operating costs (commonly referred to as "Overhead"), such as rent, utilities and other "indirect costs" may be used as match if the applicant has a negotiated indirect cost agreement in place with the federal government. These costs are ineligible for reimbursement under this grant. Indirect is allowable as match up to the grantee organization's approved Federal Negotiated Indirect Rate, to be charged as a fixed percentage on all direct costs incurred under this grant (not just personnel and fringe). Documentation of an approved Federal Negotiated Indirect Rate is required. IDOT indirect rates do not meet this requirement. If a current indirect federally negotiated rate is not available, the grantee **CANNOT** claim indirect as match. **Please Note:** This is a change from the Summer 2013 Illinois Coastal Grants RFP.

## IX. Important Dates

**Grant Information Session:** November 5, 2014, 3:30pm

**Room 31, 9<sup>th</sup> floor**

**James R. Thompson Center**

**100 W. Randolph Street**

**Chicago, IL 60601**

To attend the Grant Workshop, please RSVP to [DNR.CMP@illinois.gov](mailto:DNR.CMP@illinois.gov).

**Deadline to set up Grant Consultation:** December 1, 2014

**Application Deadline:** Monday, December 15, 2014 by 5 pm

**Project Start Date:** Approximately September 2015

**Project End Date:** Approximately February 2017

**Project Start and End Dates are dependent upon approval from NOAA.**

## X. Application Evaluation Process

### Evaluation Steps

Completed and signed applications which are received by the application deadline will be evaluated on whether they meet eligibility criteria and cost-share match minimums. Applications meeting these criteria will be evaluated by ICMP and IDNR staff following the procedures outlined below:

- ICMP staff will score projects based upon ranking criteria in Section III, and will prepare a prioritized list of projects.
- The prioritized grants will be reviewed and commented on by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), as defined in the ICMP Program Document, for technical merit, feasibility, and quality. For more information on the TAC: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/framework.aspx>
- NOAA staff will review and approve the prioritized grants recommended for funding.
- The IDNR Director will review and approve the prioritized list of projects.
- Applicants will be notified of the decision at the earliest possible date. Because notification is dependent upon various approvals, timing may vary.

### Conflict of Interest Policy

A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which the individual, one or more of their family members, or a for-profit or not-for-profit entity in which they have a substantive involvement or possible financial interest is likely to benefit if a proposal under consideration by ICMP is awarded funding. All reviewers will be required to sign a disclosure of conflict of interest statement in which they will disclose any possible financial conflicts of interest. In compliance with state law, reviewers will be required to recuse themselves from all evaluation, review and comment of proposals in which they have a conflict of interest.

## XI. Additional Program Information

### Resubmitting Applications from Previous Illinois Coastal Grants RFP

- Application materials have been updated and questions may have changed. All proposals must be on the updated forms. Applicants who previously submitted a proposal which was not funded are strongly urged to contact ICMP to schedule a time to discuss your project before resubmitting on the updated application.

### Multiple Applications

- Multiple applications may be submitted from the same organization, but each application must be for a stand-alone project and shall not be dependent upon funding of other application(s).

### Partnerships

- Applicants may work with partners to develop, design and implement proposed projects. Partnerships are encouraged and can strengthen recruitment plans by increasing potential numbers and diversity of audiences, and can increase the variety of and accessibility to expertise needed to create a model project.
- Partners can assist in meeting the matching funds requirement. If an organization, other than the grantee, supplies any of the matching funds, include a letter of commitment from the partner promising the funds.

- The grantee is legally responsible for the scope of work, maintaining records, and submitting progress reports and reimbursement requests.
- Reimbursement checks will only be payable to the grantee. If money is budgeted for work that will be completed by partners, please list it under **contracts** in the budget form.

## Subcontracts

- Subcontracting is allowed, however applicants are warned not to make commitments to any parties prematurely. Federal regulations require an open selection process for all hiring of consultants and contractors connected with a federally-funded grant.
- In compliance with federal requirements, grantees must either advertise the contract or distribute a request for proposals to a reasonable number of qualified individuals or firms and must receive back at least 3 written bids. If the item or service required is only available from a sole source, the grantee must write up a sole source justification. Project familiarity (i.e. the contractor helped write the grant application) is not an acceptable sole source justification.
- Grantees may be asked to provide evidence that the fee is appropriate considering the qualifications of the consultant/contractor and that no contractor with equal experience and qualifications is available for a lesser amount.
- Project partners that are eligible grant applicants are exempt from the open competition requirement but must provide goods or services at a fair market rate.
- Subcontracts must be disclosed to IDNR on the form provided with the grant agreement. IDNR retains the right to approve the subcontracts involving funds from this grant program. Further budget details for subcontracts may be required.

## GIS Data

- The NOAA Environmental Data Sharing Policy requires all grant recipients to make environmental data and information collected through this grant program visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users at no cost no later than two years after the data are collected or created. FGDC-compliant metadata are also required.
- If your project includes collection of aerial imagery, lidar, bathymetry data, or other geospatial data which may trigger this requirement, please contact us prior to applying.

## Equipment

- In Illinois, equipment is defined as durable goods costing more than \$100. Equipment funded with a federal grant must be tracked according to federal regulations through its entire useful life, up to and including final disposition. For many items of equipment that may be 20+ years. For that reason, grantees are strongly discouraged from purchasing equipment using this grant. Equipment can be used as match without the same tracking requirements, however the match valuation should be pro-rated based upon the equipment items' useful life.

## Reporting Requirements

- Successful applicants will be required to maintain financial records for all expenditures and must submit grant performance reports and reimbursement requests quarterly. See <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/GranteeInformation.aspx> for examples from the previous cycle. Required tracking for outreach, education or training events includes date, number of participants, and topic of each education or training event. Habitat Restoration grant recipients will need to track and report the acreage treated.
- Final reports for successful projects should include a narrative report on all work completed as part of the project, photos and project highlights, and final products created through the project

(i.e. reports, planning documents, implementation recommendations and schedules, design and construction information, copies of permits, post-project maintenance plan, curricula, etc.). Habitat restoration grant recipients will need to provide .kmz or shapefiles of areas treated.

### Additional Information for Applicants

- Confidentiality—Proposal information cannot be kept confidential. Grant proposals are considered public information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/2.5.
- Acceptance of Grant Agreement—Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the IDNR which includes standard terms and conditions which are not subject to modification. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award.



## XII. Contact Information

For more information on the Illinois Coastal Grants Program, contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Coastal Management Program  
160 N. LaSalle St., Suite S-703  
Chicago, IL 60601

Telephone: 312-814-6414

Email: [DNR.CMP@illinois.gov](mailto:DNR.CMP@illinois.gov)

Website: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/Pages/grants.aspx>

